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Message Text

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ACTION SAB-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 L-01 INR-05 INRE-00 SSO-00
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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 4930

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FOR AMBASSADORS BUNKER AND LINOWITZ FROM JORDEN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MILI, PN, PQ
SUBJECT: TREATY NEGOTIATIONS - LANDS AND WATERS; GN
PARTICIPATION

REF: PANAMA 4929

1. REFTEL REPORTS RECENT CONVERSATIONS HERE WITH CIVILIAN LANDS AND WATERS TEAM MEMBERS ABOUT CONTRERAS' APPEARANCE ON THE NEGOTIATING SCENE. WHILE THEIR VIEW MAY NOT BE SHARED BY SOME OF PANAMA'S SENIOR NEGOTIATORS, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT TORRIJOS AND THE GENERAL STAFF HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE, AND IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO IGNORE THE FULL IMPLICATIONS OF THAT FACT.

2. AS YOU KNOW, THE GENERAL STAFF AND TORRIJOS MAKE THE FINAL DECISION ON ALL MAJOR MATTERS. HE WILL NOT MOVE ANYWHERE IF HE CANNOT CARRY THE COLONELS WITH HIM. EVERY INDICATION IS THAT THEY NOW BELIEVE THE TREATY IS APPROACHING FRUITION. THEY ARE THEREFORE SEEKING TO ENSURE, THROUGH
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CONTRERAS, THAT DEFENSE-RELATED ISSUES ARE RESOLVED TO THEIR SATISFACTION.

3. MANY ITEMS THAT CONTRERAS DESCRIBED TO WALLER AND SCHATZMAN SOUND EGREGIOUS--SOME ARE SIMPLY IMPOSSIBLE. ADDRESSING THEM WILL BE TROUBLESOME, ESPECIALLY GIVEN CONTRERAS' EVIDENT PREFERENCE FOR WORKING OUTSIDE THE

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FORMAL NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK. BUT TRYING TO AVOID
HIM SIMPLY EVADES THE PROBLEM. IT IS PROBABLY IMPOSSIBLE
AND, IN MY VIEW, WILL CAUSE MORE TROUBLE FOR US THAN HIS
POSITION WILL BRING.

4. THIS BEING THE CASE, I SUGGEST YOU CONSIDER THE
FOLLOWING APPROACH TO "MANAGE" THIS DEVELOPMENT AND
TRY TO TURN IT TO OUR ADVANTAGE:

A. WELCOME CONTRERAS' PARTICIPATION AS SIGNIFYING
NATIONAL GUARD RECOGNITION OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES IT
WILL HAVE FOR GROWING PARTICIPATION IN JOINT DEFENSE
OF THE CANAL.

B. REGARDING THE POSITIONS HE BRINGS, WE SHOULD NOT TELL HIM
TO GO FLY A KITE. BUT WE SHOULD STRESS TO HIM AND OTHERS THAT
WE ARE DEALING OBJECTIVELY AND PROFESSIONALLY WITH THEM, NOT
ACCEPTING THEM.

C. WE SHOULD STRESS THAT DISCUSSION ON BOTH SIDES BE FIRMLY
BASED IN REALITY. RATHER THAN LETTING HIM DRAW LINES ON A MAP,
WE NEED TO MAKE HIM SEE FOR HIMSELF WHY THEIR LINES (E.G.,
CANFIELD AVENUE AT ALBROOK) SIMPLY DO NOT WORK. WE SHOULD ACCEPT
THAT IT IS EVEN POSSIBLE HE WILL CONVINCE US IN SOME CASES THAT
THEY DO.

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D. IN THE SAME VEIN, WE MUST NOT ALLOW HIM TO FIND US PUTTING
TENNIS COURTS WHERE THEY ARE NOT. THIS SORT OF PETTY DETAIL
INFURIATES MEN LIKE HIM AND THE GENERAL WITH THE WHOLE BUSINESS.

E. WITHOUT ALLOWING HIM TO ESCAPE FROM CONTROL, WE SHOULD
SATISFY HIS INTEREST IN "COUNTERPART" OFFICERS BY BRINGING
SOUTHCOM VISIBLY AND DIRECTLY INTO THE PICTURE ON OUR SIDE.
CONTRERAS AND THE GENERAL STAFF MAY BE MORE PREPARED TO BELIEVE
THINGS THEY WILL NOT LIKE FROM THEM THAN FROM US, HOWEVER
BACKWARD THIS MAY SEEM.

F. THIS CAN PERHAPS BE DONE IN WASHINGTON. BUT I BELIEVE

IT COULD BE DONE BETTER HERE. CONTRERAS IS LIKELY TO BE MORE
COMFORTABLE ON HIS HOME GROUND. AND THE FACTS HE NEEDS TO SEE
AND DEAL WITH ARE HERE, NOT THERE.

5. I REALIZE THIS MIGHT TAKE TIME, PERHAPS MORE THAN
WE WISH TO SPEND AT THIS JUNCTURE. BUT IF WE PLAN ON
TAKING THAT TIME, WE MAY WITH LUCK NOT NEED IT. IF WE PLAN
ON NOT TAKING IT, I BELIEVE IT WILL TAKE A GREAT DEAL OF LUCK
TO FIND A WORKABLE AND ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT AT ALL.

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6. I SUGGEST THAT YOU DISCUSS THIS WITH DOM DOLVIN AND ALSO
WITH GENERAL MCAULIFFE. THE THOUGHT OF THIS PARTICULAR BULL
LUNGING INTO THE CHINA SHOP IS TACTICALLY DISTRESSING. BUT I
KNOW OF NO DOOR STRONG ENOUGH TO KEEP HIM OUT. THERE IS NO WAY
WE CAN FINISH A TREATY WITHOUT THE BLESSING OF THE GENERAL STAFF.
NOW THAT WE HAVE A WAY OF REACHING THEM DIRECTLY. I BELIEVE
WE SHOULD TRY TO USE IT TO MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE.
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